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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a seminar designed to help preservice teachers to develop awareness, insights, and vibrant approaches for empowering students socially and academically. The premises of the seminar were that all children can learn and that teachers, parents, and the community are vital links in their learning. The seminar examined some of the environments from which many urban children come and assessed the successes as well as the failures of such environments, with the goal of helping preservice teachers to be able to capitalize on experiences and factors that lead to such successes and to avoid or to restructure experiences and factors that cause failure. Materials used in the seminar are described in detail. An annotated bibliography of 19 publications used in the seminar is grouped into four categories--social barriers, autobiography, a glimpse of the child's world, and the classroom. Descriptions of activities generated from the books and three videotapes, as well as from other adapted materials, are listed. The seminar used nontraditional approaches including modeling/observation, and discovery/heuristic learning, as well as "hands-on", auditory, and visual modalities. The seminar outcomes suggest that critical thinking is best developed in an interactive, participatory environment where the teacher is a coach or a facilitator. The paper concludes that changes in the delivery of information and teaching approaches in public schools, especially urban schools, will only come when universities themselves use nontraditional materials, activities, and nontraditional approaches to prepare teachers. Contains 12 references. (NC)

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A Seminar of Social and Academic Vistas of the Urban Child: An Interactive, Participatory Approach to Empower Non-traditional, Preservice, Urban-Education Teachers

Joan M. Baker, Cleveland State University

Most critics of the public schools whether they be the average citizens, parents, legislators, students, researchers or theorists agree that many of our schools--especially our urban schools--are not working. The various critics, however, may have very different solutions.

The average citizen or parent solution may stress back to basics. Those with the back-to-basics solution usually have reference to what happened when they were in school and the perception that it was successful--their schools were working. To some degree they are correct. But, there were always students who were not served well by our schools. In the past, many of the students who were not well served left the secondary school early to join the work force. However, another factor that did make schools work in the first five decades of this century was that the schools served a less diverse population who had greater family homogeneity, were more community oriented, and lived in a less complex society than the population of today's schools. It was, therefore, easier to teach the traditional curriculum.

Among legislators, a popular solution for making schools work is the use of the mandated state proficiency test. This test which is criterion referenced or mastery level in design often becomes the standard for graduation. In such settings, the proficiency test often becomes a core curriculum much like Hirsch's core curriculum for cultural literacy.

Most researchers and theorists, on the other hand, feel that the solution for "what ails" contemporary schools will not occur through any panacea such as the back-to-basics movement or proficiency testing

but through restructuring or reinventing our schools so as to better serve today's diverse population. Most researchers and theorists believe that the restructuring must be comprehensive including substantive changes in funding and all other components of the school. One of these critical components is teaching.

The Seminar of Social and Academic Vistas of the Urban Child which I developed, though not a panacea, does provide substantive changes in teaching the preservice teacher. In teacher education, there is a saying that teachers teach the way that they are taught. It would follow, then, that if it is desirable for teachers to teach differently, we at the university model new or non-traditional ways of teaching. Any comprehensive changes for our schools--especially the urban schools--must start with university preparation of preservice teachers.

In developing this seminar, I was aware of the need to have a new model for teaching preservice teachers. I was well aware that most education professors present the current research, theories, and best practices to preservice teachers; however, many professors use the traditional lecture mode--the professor as the teller, use only one textbook along with some library research, and seldom have real interactive or participatory classes. Therefore, in this seminar, I designed many opportunities to use modeling or observation and discovery or heuristic ways of learning and no traditional lectures, non-traditional materials and activities, and an interactive-participatory approach. I found that this design was successful for teaching the non-traditional preservice teachers in the DeWitt Wallace Reader's Digest Pathways to Teaching Careers Program at Cleveland State University.

Plan of the Seminar

The Seminar on Issues in Urban Education--Social and Academic vistas of the Urban Child--was designed for Cleveland State University preservice teachers who are preparing to teach children (primary, elementary, secondary) in the urban areas of Greater Cleveland. The premises of the seminar were that all children can learn and that teachers, parents, and the community are vital links in their learning. The teachers, parents, and community must be in a liaison relationship. Since teachers in our contemporary and future schools must be facilitators in active student learning, it was the plan of the seminar to provide preservice teachers with a holistic view of the child.

The seminar examined some of the environments from which many of the urban children come and assessed the successes as well as the failures of such environments. Knowledge of both the successes and failures allowed the preservice teachers to capitalize on experiences and factors that led to such successes and to avoid or to restructure experiences and factors that have caused failure.

The goal of the seminar was to help preservice teachers to develop awareness, insights, and vibrant approaches through theory and practice for empowering students socially and academically. The preservice teachers came to view themselves as classroom facilitators who see, teach, and nurture the urban child holistically and who empower this child through shared responsibilities and decision making. Such vistas, approaches, and empowerment of the preservice teachers will enable them to help their students in diverse classrooms to be self-motivated, productive problem solvers who are ready for the challenges of their ever-changing roles in a complex, global society.

Preservice Teachers

To achieve the goal set forth in the "Plan of the Seminar" by the use of special preservice teachers, materials, activities, and approaches means that such a program must differ significantly from the traditional teacher education program. This statement is validated by a number of theorists. If a reader examines Kozol's (1991) Savage Inequalities or the Commission of Policy for Racial Justice's (1989) Visions of a Better Way or Schorr's 1989) Within Our Reach or Dillard's (1994A) "Beyond Supply and Demand: Critical Pedagogy. Ethnicity, and Empowerment in Recruiting Teachers of Color," Teacher Education or Jackson's (1994) "Seven Strategies to Support a Culturally Response Pedagogy," Journal of Reading, he/she would note that all of the theorists critique what is happening in our contemporary urban schools and look with apprehension to the future when schools will be more diverse in every way than today's schools.

The theorists' critiques and apprehensions are in part based on the pervasiveness of traditional teaching where students are treated as passive receivers of knowledge and teachers use the lecture mode where the teacher is the teller. Such traditional teaching does not have a modicum of a chance to affect the substantive changes which are needed. It is only the non-traditional teachers who are willing to model, locate and use and/or develop non-traditional materials, experiences, and approaches who will cause dramatic changes in learning and student outcomes.

The student participants in the seminar were non-traditional. The preservice teachers had been recruited by Cleveland State University through a grant from the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Pathways to Teaching Careers Program (DeWitt Wallace Program). [The

director, Dr. Nancy Klein, and the coordinator, Mrs. Connie Sallee', were unusual themselves since both are experienced, stellar educators and have an allegiance to better urban schools and improved learner outcomes.] The goal of the DeWitt Wallace Program is to recruit preservice teachers "especially those from under-represented groups to work in urban schools." In line with the goal of the DeWitt Wallace Program, Cleveland State University recruited preservice teachers who already worked as educational aides in the Cleveland Public Schools by choice. These preservice teachers had great insights into the urban students, the schools, and the challenges. Beyond expectations, the recruited preservice teachers were more knowledgeable and insightful about academic tasks, were empathetic rather than sympathetic toward urban students, viewed the urban students holistically, and had the ability to empower students academically and socially. These preservice teachers were optimal for the DeWitt Wallace Program inclusive of this seminar.

Materials/Activities

The materials and activities, like the preservice teachers, were non-traditional. The seminar supplanted the introduction to sociology course that is a requirement for education majors. In adhering to the contents of the introduction to sociology course, this seminar did study human social behavior and the institutions that aid in development of human behavior especially that behavior relating to urban areas. Rather than a traditional sociological text being used, books that dealt with contemporary social issues, autobiographies of people who had overcome numerous social problems, books that examined

a child's glimpse of our world and the relating social issues, and books that dealt with contemporary education. Several pertinent videos were also used. The materials could be further be classified in a cross-curriculum way under the categories of sociology, psychology, education, and language arts. Additionally, both books and videos that were used depicted individuals and groups in the process of daily living and constant struggles with social systems and individual issues and problems. Another unusual feature was that a number of the books were really intended for an audience of children. In order to get the favor of the materials an annotated bibliography follows. Each general category--social, a child's glimpse of our world, autobiography, and education--begins with a rationale for the inclusion of the materials in that category:

Social: While all children can learn, children in the urban areas often have almost insurmountable education, political, social, and racial barriers to overcome,

Kotlowitz, A. (1991), There are no children here, New York: Doubleday.

Kotlowitz's sociological study tells the story of two young brothers--Pharoah and Lafeyette--and their family's daily struggles for survival in Chicago's Henry Horner Housing Project where death, violence, hunger, hopelessness and social injustice are constant companions. This superbly written book paints a vivid, though poignant picture of children and adults caught up in a war-like atmosphere where these youngsters must not only deal with children's issues of school and play but must shoulder the responsibility of poverty, crime, police brutality, and social injustice. Kotlowitz says that they trudge a shaky bridge to adolescence and to adult life.

Kozol, J. (1992), Savage inequalities, children in america's schools, New York: Harper Perennial.

Kozol describes the inequities in many of American schools serving the poor where there may be dedicated teachers who struggle to motivate and to teach children in classrooms which are dilapidated and even unhealthful with old textbooks or no textbooks and with no equipment or very, very obsolete equipment. Teachers in such schools often buy their own supplies and bring in their own equipment--Kozol tells of a teacher who brought his own VCR to school so that his students could see a video. Kozol clearly points out that poor children are often subjected to schools that are poverty-stricken and unable to meet their academic and social needs.

Rose, M. (1989), Lives on the boundary, New York: The Free Press.

Rose, Writing Center, University of California at Los Angeles, gives an account of how a number of students including himself are often incorrectly placed in learning disabled or other special education classes. Fortunately for him and some other students, a teacher with critical evaluative skills and insights challenged his placement. Rose states that many misplaced students often remain in such special education placements which are often not stimulating and, therefore, fail to develop to their full potential.

Schorr, L. with D. Schorr, (1989), Within our reach, New York: Doubleday.

Schorr's sociological text examines social conditions for many of our poor who according to Schorr come into adulthood unschooled and unskilled. She describes people who have the will to change this condition and programs that work. She states that Band-Aid approaches have failed and will continue to fail. Only programs that have a built in on-call support system where physical and mental health, education, and economics are provided in a synergistic way for the poor will lead to substantive changes. Schorr says we know how to do this; now, America must develop the will because this is not a poor people's problem, it is one which will affect all Americans.

Autobiography: The books under this category all show that people can overcome setbacks or obstacles--poverty, racism, dyfunctional families, and other problems--in life and succeed.

Carson, B. (1990), Gifted hands, Grand Rapid, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House.

Carson tells about the joys of his early life in a nuclear family, only to have this joy dissolve with the knowledge that his father was a bigamist. However, by following the strict directions of his poor yet hard-working mother--avoid gangs, do not be obsessed with clothes, study hard, read four to five books each week--he became a top scholar and won a scholarship to Yale; he graduated from Yale and then completed medical school. Today, he is one of America's top neurosurgeons.

Comer, J. (1988) Maggie's american dream, New York: New American Library.

Comer credits his mother's dreams and assertiveness with smoothing his path and helping him to understand and function well despite growing up in a racist community. He completed college and medical school and today is one of America's top child psychiatrists.

Rhodes, R., (1990) A hole in the world, New York: Simon and Schuster.

Rhodes, whose biological mother committed suicide when he was only 13 months old, tells of growing up in a very dysfunctional, abusive home with his henpecked, psychologically unsupportive, biological father and an extremely cruel stepmother and later living in an orphanage. During his painful childhood, he escaped his environment by becoming a voracious reader. He received a scholarship to Yale. He graduated, but he was falling into alcoholism until he received counseling. He later wrote a Pulitzer-prize-winning book The Making of the Atomic Bomb.

A Child's Glimpse of our World: The books in this section depict how young people deal with critical, social issues.

Chbosky, S. (1988) Who owns the sun, Kansas City, Missouri: Landmark Editions, Inc.

Chbosky was 14 years old when she wrote this book. The book which was very creatively written starts off in a very child-like way with the main character questioning the ownership of the phenomena of nature and ends unpredictably with the main character questioning slavery--the ownership of people. It is an extremely poignant book to have been written by an adolescent. The book has a message for adults as well as young readers.

Spinelli, J. (1990) Maniac magee, New York: Harper Trophy.

Spinelli's Newbery-Medal-winning fiction book for young readers, which is legendary in parts because of the extreme hyperboly incorporated into the book, has scenes where the main character deals albeit in a child-like manner with adult problems such as married couple's incompatibility, divorce, death of parents, race separation, homelessness, illiteracy, and schools. Adults and children find this book humorous as well as having some parts that fill the reader with pathos.

The Classroom: The reason for utilizing the collection of books in this category is to allow the preservice teachers to be aware of, to examine, and to use process learning; active learning--observation or modeling and discovery or heuristics; alternative student grouping--cooperative, collaborative, learning triad, paired learning, viable, workable approaches to discipline; and participatory, interactive approaches to learning and, therefore, prepare their students for the new millennium.

Atwell, N., (1987), In the middle writing, reading, and learning with adolescents, Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Boynton/Cook Publishers, Heinemann.

Atwell describes her personal growth and the struggles, successes, and development of her middle school students as they learned, embraced, and internalized the writing, reading, and learning processes through the use and production of narrative and creative writing.

Canfield, J. and Wells, H. C. (1976) 100 ways to enhance self-concept in the classroom, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc.

Canfield and Wells provide suggestions and activities inclusive of cartoons and jokes for teacher awareness and utilization in the critical job of improving self concept of students in the classroom.

Carducci, D. and Carducci, J. (1984), The caring classroom, Palo Alto, California: Bull Publishing Company.

The Carduccis discuss alternate ways of dealing with "at risk" students at a residential detention school where Carducci worked. He provides strategies for having students own their problems as well as empowering them socially and academically. One of his approaches is the use of learning triads for the students social and academic growth.

Comer, J. (1980), School Power, New York: The Free Press.

Comer of the Yale University Child Center, expresses the thought that America's challenge is to enhance the social context for teaching and learning in each school. Further, because today's parents and the school do not always share the same values, this creates conflict. The media is another source of conflict. Interaction and social networking seem to be a viable answer.

Cunningham, P. and Allington, R. (1994), Classrooms that work; they can all read and write, New York: HarperCollins College Publishers.

Cunningham and Allington encourage the use of high quality literacy instruction for all children especially those with problems in the area of literacy acquisition. They stress that the teacher change or adapt the learning environment through materials and models that motivate the students. They feel that teachers can empower students by knowing the research and multimethods. They discuss the need for fairness in funding for all schools. The teacher variable is a crucial one. They state, "For most children who 'beat the odds,' it is the teacher who made the difference" p.251.

Dewey, J., (1956), The school and society and the child and curriculum, Chicago: The niversity of Chicago Press,

Dewey states that schools need to broaden their goals and objectives beyond subject learning to the task of preparing students for life; discipline and character building should be included. A society should be held together by common lives, spirit, and aims. Dewey quoted Horace Mann who said, "Where anything is growing, one former is worth a thousand re-formers."

Dreikurs, R. and Cassell, P., (1974), Discipline without tears, New York: Hawthorn/Dutton.

Dreikurs, and Cassell use a quotation from Don C. Dinkmeyer which seems to be a good annotation for this book. The quotation is, "If you are interested in changing behavior, whether it be in the home or the school, you must seek to establish some link between the child's already existing motives and goals of learning. You must align what he wants to do with what he is capable of doing. Too much present motivation has been directed toward extrinsic rewards... Ways must be found to utilize intrinsic motivation, performing for the enjoyment and satisfaction in the act, in contrast to extrinsic rewards."

Glasser, W., (1985), Control theory in the classroom, New York: Harper and Row Publishers.

Glasser points out that the population in our contemporary public schools is different from decades ago when the focus on basic needs and basic learning was sufficient. Today, students not only need basic need fulfillment and basic learning, but they need to feel a sense of belonging, to be loved, empowered, free, and to find fun and joy in learning. The key is that motivation comes from within. The learning-team model where every student has a role in the learning of the team and his/her own learning seems to be more congruent with today's students than the traditional lecture model.

Hill, P., (1992) Coming of age, african american male rites of passage, Chicago, Illinois: Afrian American Images.

Hill examines the social status and demographics of the African American male including the many past and present devastations. After such an examination, numerous prescriptions for affecting positive, substantive changes which reflect Africentric socialization and a paradigm for positive Black [African American] development are given. Hill says that schools usually reflect the same peril that the general society has thrusted on African Americans so that the African American child--especially the male--is at risk socially and academically. He stresses the need for following Africentric models including cooperative learning and the fact that, "...There are not gifted, average, and impaired groupings." but that all children can learn.

Schlechty, P., (1991) Schools for the 21st century, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Schlechty states that our schools should be restructured so that they are aligned with our economy and work force. Schools have to set a new purpose based on their values, commitment, and the very diverse population they now serve. It is very important that schools always do remember that liberty and ignorance are not compatible. Interactive, participatory strategies must be used by all decision makers including parents and students. Our schools must empower students and reward and honor educators.

Videos: The non-traditional videos that were used were all part of commercial rather than educational television or educational or university productions.

There are no children here is Oprah Winfrey's television production of Alex Kotlowitz's book in which Oprah plays the role of the mother. The book is annotated earlier in this bibliography.

Jennings, P. and Blakemore, B. (Narrators), (1991) ABC news special: Common miracles: The new american revolution in learning, USA: American Broadcasting Company.

Peter Jennings and Bill Blakemore discuss and depict schools across the United States that work. The discussion and depictions are compelling and include such things as the inappropriateness of norm-referenced tests and the more appropriateness of criterion-referenced tests, multiple methods of teaching, teachers as facilitators, student empowerment, avoidance of tracking, mentoring of students by the business community, vital use of computers, critical importance of parent involvement, Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence, principals as leaders, and many other critical school issues. The narrators said education is the great equalizer.

Brown, Les, (1993) They told me I'd never amount to anything, Bloomfield, Michigan: King World/LBS, Inc.

The thesis for this program is that all children can learn. Brown interviews five celebrities; all of whom overcame a problem. The celebrities include Greg Louganis, Stephen J. Cannell, Walter Anderson, Wally Amos [Famous Amos], and Kathy Buckley. Greg Louganis, an Olympic gold-medal-winning swimmer, and Stephen J. Cannell, a television screenwriter, both overcame dyslexia; Wally Amos overcame his lack of motivation and became a famous cook; Walter Anderson, editor of Parade Magazine, overcame his poor self esteem caused in part by his abusive, alcoholic father; and Kathy Buckley, a hearing impaired comedienne, learned to speak articulately and to share her wit despite her hearing disability. Dr. Diane Frazier, the program's resource person, stated the teachers are often very helpful to children with problems; teachers are not appreciated in this culture; many children have a different style of learning; individualized teaching and learning are needed; reproduction of what the teacher wants is really not learning.

The materials for the seminar included all of the books and videos which are annotated above and student-developed assignments for the preservice teachers' seminar.

While all the books were utilized during the seminar, some were read by all preservice teachers, others were read by some preservice teachers and shared with their classmates, some were used as reference

materials for completing some of the seminar assignments, and others were used as reference sources as the preservice teachers developed holistic strategies for their own classrooms.

The books that were read by all preservice teachers were Kotlowitz's There are No Children Here, Schorr's Within Our Reach, and Spinelli's Maniac Magee. Similarly, all three videos were viewed by all of the preservice teachers. Further, each preservice teacher was required to read one of the three autobiographies--Carson's Gifted Hands, Comer's Maggie's American Dream, or Rhodes' A Hole in the World The preservice teachers who had read the same autobiography then collaborated to develop a group presentation. The presentation was a combination of storytelling, class discussion, book critique, and analysis of the relevancy of the information from the autobiography for urban education.

Reading aloud was even part of the seminar activities. Reading books aloud to any age audience is appropriate according to Trelease (1989). It was certainly an appropriated strategy for the preservice teachers as a class strategy when I read to them the book Who Owns the Sun, a book written by Stacy Chbosky when she was only fourteen years old. Not only were the preservice teacher in awe of the powerful book written by the fourteen-year-old writer, but they were amazed at her literary skills used in crafting such an unpredictable book much like the professional O. Henry, who was known for his surprise endings. Chbosky logically moved the reader through the plot and character development from the innocuous, natural questioning of a child about nature's phenomena without revealing the gender or slave-status of the child. In a poignant scene at the end of the book, the slave boy

vociferously questioned his beloved, slave father about his and the father's being owned. Needless to say, the preservice teachers found this book, intended for a young audience, very powerful.

The other books were read, shared, and/or referred to when needed for the understanding of the class requirements such as writing and the value of using the writing process as was done in the seminar. Atwell's In the Middle, Writing, Reading, and Learning with Adolescents was referred to in our writing activities.

Other books were used as reference resources. In holistically examining and contemplating workable strategies for the urban child, Hill's Coming of Age, African American Male Rites of Passage, where Hill presented past and present community and social and academic experiences, was read and shared. Comer's School Power with its stress on parent-school-child-community interaction and mental health and academic development was consulted. For student collaboration and grouping for optimal academic and social growth and development, and best practices, Carducci's Caring Classroom, Glasser's Control Theory in the Classroom, and Cunningham's Classrooms that Work; They Can all Read and Write were referred to. In looking at the affective domain, Canfield and Wells 100 Ways to Enhance Self-Concept in the Classroom, which shows many ways to develop positive self concepts, and Dreikurs and Cassell's Discipline without Tears, which stressed the need to developed intrinsic rather than extrinsic controls, were used. Schlechty's Schools for the 21st Century helped with the structuring of our seminar so that it was both interactive and participatory and a relevant model for the future teachers.

The preservice-teacher-developed assignments [They are presented in greater detail in the activity section.]--a relevant-issue pamphlet or how-to booklet, a school-related autobiography, a reader response journal, and an undeliverable letter--which provided opportunities for peer sharing of ideas, creativity, and feelings--were also very important, non-traditional materials for the seminar.

The activities were generated from the books and videos—annotated in the above bibliography— and the preservice-teacher-developed materials which are described below:

- A group-designed pamphlet or group-designed booklet was a collaborative undertaking. The task of each group was to decide on a topic, information, audience, and design of a booklet or pamphlet which gave strategies for dealing with gangs, school violence, and other issues or a "how-to" booklet or pamphlet such as how to do a math problems, how to read a map, or other items.

- A school-related autobiography was to share their experiences in public or private school as a student and later as an employee. Negative and positive experiences were to be included.

- The reading response journal was used to examine characters in assigned texts or the people in autobiographies.

- The undeliverable letter was to be written to address a serious problem in the schools--it should describe steps to affect a change; however, the letter was just to be cathartic since it was not to be delivered.

- The final essay was an end-of-the-class activity in which awarenesses, insights, approaches, and solutions that the preservice teacher acquired in the seminar and that would empower the urban learner academically and socially were to be discussed.

The activities included all of the language arts--reading, writing, speaking, and listening--critical thinking, creative thinking, Bloom's taxonomy, collaboration, sharing, storytelling, read-alouds, and continuous interaction and participation. An example of one or more ways that each of the above was used follows:

- All of the language arts were used in the reading and discussion

of the assigned books in a critical way. Such discussion was different from the prior experiences of many of the preservice teachers in which there was only one acceptable answer. The seminar capitalized on the fact that because of different schemata and experiences of different readers, there are usually a number of plausible answers for a reading selection. The use of the reading response journal provided the opportunity for writing. Storytelling was the first part of the group presentation of each group's autobiography.

- Writing and collaborating was part of many of the activities. For most writing activities, the writing process was used including gathering ideas which incorporated reading and putting ideas on paper, and sharing and brainstorming with a peer, developing a first draft, conferencing with a peer and conferencing with me [the teacher], revising including conferencing, and finally publishing.

- In presenting the group-read autobiographies, each student had a formal speaking role determined within the group.

- Critical thinking and the employment of Bloom's Taxonomy was part of all reading and writing assignments.

- As mentioned in the above section, I read Who Owns the Sun to the preservice teachers. This was the read-aloud experience.

- The preservice-teacher-developed pamphlet or booklet involved creative thinking and were the creative products of a pair of preservice teachers. (The preservice teachers were very proud of their booklets or pamphlets which they later shared and used in the schools where they worked as paraprofessionals.)

- The most powerful and in some cases poignant was the sharing of the school-related autobiographies. Many of the past and present school experiences had been very painful--some because of racial or socioeconomic conditions [One preservice teacher from South America told of her malnourished childhood and its affect on her schooling.]. Many of the presenters and listeners wept during the sharing.

- Collaboration and interaction were constants in the seminar. For each class meeting the chairs were arranged in a circle. I as the teacher was only the coach or facilitator. Each person had an important role.

In conclusion, even though the materials and activities were embraced by the preservice teachers, initially the preservice teachers stated that they felt overwhelmed by the materials and activities. A metamorphosis occurred when they experienced the pertinence and high

human interest level of the materials and the flexible, collaborative nature of the activities. (Many of the preservice teachers enthusiastically shared their booklists with teachers in their schools.) What is more important, the preservice teachers saw that non-traditional materials and activities can work in the classroom and were willing to try them in their own classrooms as teachers.

The Approach

Peter Jennings in Common Miracles, A New American Revolution in Learning says that in the traditional approach, the teacher does all of the work because the teacher is the vessel of the knowledge which will be dispensed to the students. Diane Frazier, resource person on the Les Brown program, stated that reproduction of what the teacher wants is not really learning. Similarly, Ekwall and Oswald's study where they examined how humans learn in terms of retention stated that student's power of retention is only ten percent of what they read and 20 percent of what they hear. This would suggest that just reading and listening alone are not powerful education strategies. In the traditional classroom, reading and listening are usually the sole means of learning.

Unlike the traditional approach, this seminar used non-traditional approaches. Dewey's theory of the active learner and Schlechty's emphasis on the need for classrooms to be interactive and participatory played a big part in the design of the seminar using a non-traditional approach.

As far as learning, rather than the traditional lecture model which nurtures receptive learning; modeling/observation and discovery/heuristic learning were used. In addition, the seminar used

a multimodality approach where kinesthetic and tactile or a "hands-on" approach was used, especially in the development of the pamphlet, as well as auditory and visual modalities.

The seminar approach involved critical as well as creative thinking, the use of fiction and nonfiction, the synthesis of language arts, civics, history, sociology, and psychology, cross-age literature (Powerful ideas are found in children and adolescent's books.), across-the-curriculum reading and writing, a holistic view of the urban child showing that feelings, motivation, and interest are important variables in learning, and the teacher as a facilitator. Not only did the preservice teachers feel that the approach was do-able in the the classroom, but they enjoyed it and felt empowered by its use.

Summary

"The promise of American education is to take children as it finds them and education them. It is the school's responsibility to overcome those social barriers that limit academic progress" (The Committee on Policy and Racial Justice, 1989, p. 3). The non-traditional preservice teachers came to understand that it is impossible for American education to take children as it finds them and education them without first having a view of the child as is presented in There are No Children Here or without having some insights into the child's view of the world as provided in the child-written book Who Owns the Sun and Maniac Magee. Further, the non-traditional materials made the preservice teachers cognizant of

the fact that critical ideas and viable solutions can come from various sources such as fiction and nonfiction, videos, peer interaction, and self discovery.

The preservice teachers discovered that critical thinking is best developed in an interactive, participatory environment where the teacher is a coach or a facilitator. The preservice teachers were so sold on modeling/observation and discovery/heuristic learning that they vowed not to use receptive learning or the "teacher as the teller" approach. However, I informed them that it was almost impossible to have a class where no receptive learning is done, but it should not be the sole or primary mode of learning.

All in all the non-traditional preservice teachers enjoyed the seminar and vowed to practice non-traditional approaches with non-traditional materials and activities in their own classrooms. Changes in the delivery of information and approaches in our public schools--especially the urban schools--will only come with changes at the university where non-traditional materials and activities and non-traditional approaches are modeled and practiced with preservice teachers rather than just being discussed.

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